

## The World's 10 Drunkest Countries

Source: The Street

By Jason Notte

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Beer drinkers in the U.S. may throw back enough suds to hold their own at a kegger, but they're lightweights compared with their international beer buddies.

Americans put down 19.97 gallons of beer per capita last year, according to Euromonitor International. That's more than a 15.5-gallon keg apiece, or nearly four of their buddy's five-gallon homebrew kegs. It's also down 7% from 2006 and almost half of what the top beer-drinking nation in the world quaffed last year.

Czechs drink more than two full U.S. kegs of beer and nearly double the amount of beer enjoyed by their U.S. counterparts.

Anheuser-Busch InBev(BUD\_) and MolsonCoors(TAP\_) have seen their U.S. sales slide in recent years. Meanwhile, advances by imported beers from Diageo(DEO\_) and Constellation Brands(STZ\_) and craft beers from brewers such as Samuel Adams maker Boston Beer(SAM\_) haven't brought drinkers back to the taps just yet. With help from Euromonitor, we found the top beer-drinking nations in the world and took a look at just what it would take for America to make it to last call with those countries:

10th-drunkest country: Bulgaria

Gallons of beer per person: 20.34

It's been more than 160 years since Hungarian exiles first brought beer to Bulgaria and just a little less since Czechs, Germans and Austrians lent some of their flavor to it. It's been a big beer party since, with heavy hitters including InBev, Heineken and Carlsberg pumping out barrels of great Bulgarian brews such as Kamenitza, Zagorka and Pirinsko Pivo. Considering much of that beer boom has occurred within the past 20 years or so, that's a pretty impressive display of tolerance for a country with a population smaller than New York City's.

Ninth-drunkest country: Romania

Gallons of beer per person: 21.08

Romanians have a long, storied beer history tied to strong German and Polish influences and steeped in pilsener. The Timisoreana brand stretches back nearly three centuries, while brews such as Ursus and Stejar have turned their Romanian roots into big returns for SABMiller.

Eighth-drunkest country: Lithuania

Gallons of beer per person: 24.36

The former Soviet republic not only drinks a lot of beer, but makes a whole lot of it in house. The Kalnapilis brewery, for example, has been making German-style Helles, Dortmunder and Pilsner since 1902. Svyturys, meanwhile, has been brewing since 1784 and still makes award-winning Dortmunder and Marzen styles.

Seventh-drunkest country: Poland

Gallons of beer per person: 24.75

We're actually shocked this isn't number isn't higher. That's partially because the Polish have been brewing for centuries, but mostly because brands including Zyweic and Okocim are

relatively prevalent in Polish and Russian communities here in the U.S. The SABMiller-owned Tyskie brewery alone has been cranking out lager for nearly 400 years, while Poles have been enjoying porters and bocks longer than most craft beer drinkers have known what those styles are.

Sixth-drunkest country: Slovenia

Gallons of beer per person: 25.28

Look at that number: That's being drunk by a little Alpine/Adriatic country of little more than 2 million people. That's the equivalent of everyone in Houston drinking more than keg and a half of beer a year. The concessions counters at the Toyota(TM\_) Center and Minute Maid(KO\_) Field couldn't keep up. Reliant Stadium would turn into a giant beer garden during Oktoberfest. Even crazier? It would all be lager. Slovenia's beer market is about 95% lager and dominated by the Lasko and Union brands made by locally owned Lasko Brewery. They've cornered a small market, but it's a thirsty one.

Fifth-drunkest country: Estonia

Gallons of beer per person: 26.34

The former Soviet states just love their beer, but none more so than Estonia. Estonians have been making beer in some form since the sixth century and opened their first breweries back in the 13th century. Saku Brewery was founded in 1820 and has been brewing lagers, porters, pilsners and blonde ales since Estonia declared independence in 1993. A. Le Coq Brewery dates back to 1807 and controls yet another third of the Estonian market with its porter, Viru pilsner, premium lager, Edelweiss wheat beer and numerous other varieties. Is it any good? Ask the folks drinking two full 13-gallon European kegs of it a year.

Fourth-drunkest country: Austria

Gallons of beer per person: 26.58

Though it rarely gets its due among beer lovers in the U.S., Austria has a pervasive beer culture built on a lighter, more caramel-flavored German Marzen lager. If beer lovers get the chance to visit or get to a beer bar here with a long import list, Steigl's Helles and Hefeweizen, a can of Ottakringer Helles or a coffee-flavored Gosser are worth a taste.

Third-drunkest country: Germany

Gallons of beer per person: 27.9

Do we really have to explain why beer is popular in Germany? Do we need to go through the explanations of wheat beers, Kolsch, Helles, Marzen, beer steins, beer boots, Oktoberfest or the German beer purity law -- Reinheitsgebot -- that limited ingredients to water, hops and malt? Do we have to explain why the largest country on this list at 82 million people still drinks nearly 28 gallons of beer per person each year? Yes? Then stop reading, because you clearly just hate beer.

Second-drunkest country: Ireland

Gallons of beer per person: 29.43

Thank the folks at Guinness for that image of a tall, dark glass of dry stout topped with a finger of silky foam that comes to mind every time "beer" and "Ireland" enter the same sentence. Just don't thank the Irish. Not only does the country make a great red ale and other perfectly pleasant styles, but it often prefers the styles it doesn't make at all. Euromonitor found that Guinness' market share has slipped from more than 31% in 2006 to just 27% last year.

Budweiser, Heineken and Carlsberg lagers now account for 33.8% of Irish market share, while lager in general is well over 60% of what fills Irish pints these days.

The drunkest country: Czech Republic

Gallons of beer per person: 38.04

That's right: Czechs drink more than two full U.S. kegs of beer and nearly double the amount of beer enjoyed by their U.S. counterparts. American tourists who've paid about \$1 for a pint of Staropramen, Budvar, Gambrinus, Radegast or Pilsner Urquell in Prague know why it's difficult to turn one down, but beer lovers who can appreciate a cask-conditioned glass of pilsner from Pilsen know why this country is beer nirvana. The monks have been brewing here for centuries, the place is awash in hops and the ubiquitous beer coupled with local culture have been Bohemian longer than most American hipster enclaves have been considered "Bohemia."